

Dress for Success

The Power of Color

Color has lots of meaning when communicating visually; don't under-estimate its use in how to look your best and set the tone of your presence in a room.

Women

Suit

Slacks or a skirt can be worn. A skirt that comes between just above the knee to mid calf is best. It allows a more feminine look which does not challenge a male interviewer without bringing unwanted attention to the legs. You want them to focus on your brains, not your figure.

Be sure your suit fits well, not too tight or too loose.

A solid color that is best for your skin tones is best. A darker suit will give you a more commanding look. Black is too stark for an interview suit, navy blue is a better color.

Burgundy, dark green, dark brown or charcoal grey are also good choices.

If your skirt is not lined, please wear a slip to maintain an unrevealed silhouette in the light.

Blouse

A white or pastel shirt is best, avoid pink. If you may end up taking off your jacket, make sure that your shirt is not see-through, revealing your bra. Wear a camisole to maintain modesty. Sleeves are more appropriate for the office than sleeveless and definitely more appropriate than just a camisole.

Wear a neckline that flatters your face shape and figure. Avoid wearing too low of a neckline for you. If the person you are talking to has a tendency to glance down at your neckline, chances are that it is too low for the office. The attention needs to be directed to your eyes, the great communicators.

Make sure your blouse is clean and pressed.

Shoes

Close toed shoes with moderate heels and soles are best. Flats are too casual and tall thin heels are not only uncomfortable but too dressy for the office. Have your shoes be in good repair, clean, and polished.

Purses and bags as well as belts should match each other for a look that tells people you have your business life put together.

Accessories

Keeping accessories minimal will enable you to be unencumbered as you work. Be sure the accessories guide who you are talking to up to your eyes. Keep your earrings, necklaces, and bracelets moderate to small in size. This will keep people from being distracted by jangling noise or distracting movement.

Scarves are great for the office to add color and variety as well as help keep you warm in those frigid air-conditioned offices.

Men

The most proven success uniform for men is:

Dark Suit:

Navy blue is the best color; it represents high ethics and strength. The suit may be solid or have a slight pinstripe pattern.

Have your suit fit by a tailor to ensure a sharp image.

Shirt:

A clean pressed solid white or light blue long sleeved shirt tells people you are ready to put forth your best.

Tie:

Use a conservative patterned tie with some red in it. Red is a power color and demands more respect, especially if it has a striped pattern. Ties with animals, characters, cartoons, and flowers can be fun to wear, but are not appropriate for a job interview or special job related meeting.

Shoes and Belt:

Thinner soled leather dress shoes will put your walking into success faster than any other type. They can be an oxford or a slip-on style, but need to be of good quality, with a good shine on them. Black or oxblood (a purple red-brown color) are best. Brown shoes are for brown or tan suits and slacks. Be sure the color and material of your belt matches your shoes.

Job Interview First Impressions

Like it or not, job interviewers can usually tell whether or not you are an ideal candidate for the job within the first minute. First impressions are given with your personal appearance, outfit, facial expressions and body language. They can make or break you. To make a great first impression, walk in with confidence, but not cockiness, give a firm handshake, introduce yourself in a pleasurable tone of voice, make eye contact, sit up straight, show your enthusiasm and take a deep breath!

You only 30 seconds to make a good first impression that can make or break your chances of getting a job offer. Here are some tips to help you out.

Appearance: Always dress for success. Wear clothes that are professional. A suit for men and a pant or skirt suit for women. Be sure they are clean and fit well. Nails need to be clean and tidy not bitten off with bad cuticles.

Posture: Use good posture whether you are sitting or standing, it shows confidence. If you slouch it might make them think you're either too nervous or too laid back.

Handshake: Your handshake is one of the most important parts of a first impression. A firm (but not vice-like) handshake, good eye contact and a relaxed smile give you a confident start.

If you're not sure about your handshake, ask for feedback from a friend.

Smile: There are two elements to a smile; good, relaxed eye contact and a relaxed, confident smile. It doesn't matter whether or not you show your teeth. If the interviewer feels like your penetrating stare is too much or your manic grin is uncomfortable, you won't make a great first impression.

Job Interview Manners and Etiquette

Don't take it for granted that this "etiquette stuff" doesn't really matter because it holds a lot of weight with the employer. And not knowing how to present yourself and act Can Cost You A Fortune in Lost Salary if someone else gets the job.

Turn up early, not more than 15 minutes (or you'll be either inconveniencing someone or sitting, waiting in reception for a long time). Sit in the car park, if you need to! Don't be less than 5 minutes early, or you may appear to be late. Being late is bad manners and can make an employer think you'd be late on all deadlines.

Treat everyone with respect; you never know who is involved in the recruitment process.

It's common for even the receptionist to be asked their opinion of candidates.

Watch your manners over lunch. The job interview isn't confined to the meeting room.

Don't get caught unprepared, research out your prospective job. Know their products, history, mission statement and other important facts including who is head of the company. Researching the company shows you're enthusiastic and gives you a great head start.

It's bad manners to go to a job interview, unless you're actually interested in the job

Don't spend most of the interview gushing about how much you want to work for the company, only to have to admit you haven't even bothered to visit one of their stores...

Don't be a "No Show" If you're not really interested, have the decency to turn down the offer of the interview. Don't waste everybody's time. If you're going to cancel, let them know. It takes a place away from a more suitable candidate. Remember it's a small world: you never know when you might need to do business with someone who was annoyed by your rudeness.

Attempt to answer questions thoroughly but as briefly as possible. Present yourself as an individual who has qualities, skills and competence. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification or repeat back the question to make sure you understand what is being asked.

Learn the **STAR** response system. When a question is asked think of a **S**ituation or a **T**ask you have experienced, the **A**ction you took and the end **R**esult.

What to Take to a Job Interview

Bring a copy of your CV / Resume. It's not uncommon for the interviewer to forget to ask for it.

Bring a notepad and pen or a palm planner (make sure the alarms are turned off) to write down any questions you have for the interviewer.

Resist the temptation to make notes during the interview, unless it's essential information

Only bring in a briefcase / handbag if it makes you feel more confident and saves you carrying paper and keys in your pockets.

Do not bring electronic devices including mobile phones or voice recorders into your interview. It will make the interviewer uncomfortable or suspicious of your intents.

Don't take it into the interview, unless it's switched off. Cancel any alarms.

Only bring references and certificates if you are specifically asked to provide them for the interview. It's best to avoid the risk of losing certificates.

Prepare for the Interview

Learn all you can about the position, requirements, specific job duties, as well as how and where does the job fit into the organization. What can you do in the position that will benefit the company? How does your background match the qualifications and requirements?

Research the organization

Be prepared for open-ended and behavior based questions – communicate your accomplishments, qualities and traits that will be valued by the organization.

Practice your interview with family, roommates, etc.

When should you ask about benefits, salary, sick pay or maternity packages?

The general rule is NOT IN THE INTERVIEW. However, you'll want answers to your questions, before you accept a job offer. So when should you raise these potentially tricky topics?

If possible, leave salary negotiations until the job offer comes through. Your confidence will be soaring and your negotiation position will be stronger.

If the absence of that benefit would mean you'd turn down the job offer, then you should check it out before you even apply - or at least before you take time off work for the interview. If it's a benefit you're more flexible about, then negotiate after the job offer. If you're already at that stage, then check out the section on salary negotiation.

Holiday entitlement, maternity leave, sick pay entitlement would form part of your contract of employment and you are entitled to see details of the company's policies before accepting the job offer.

Working hours, overtime and travel questions can be a harmless; and one you should get an answer to them; but it might lead the interviewer to start mind-reading. They could assume that, because

you "need to ask", then you'll not want to work long hours or travel. If this is an issue for you, then you should clarify it with the employer's HR contact before you apply for the job.

Job interview travel expenses are unlikely to be paid for nowadays during first round interviews. The exceptions to this rule are if you head-hunted or traveling from overseas. You may then find economy class travel will be refunded. If it's an issue for you, clarify this before accepting the interview appointment - not during the interview! Second round interviews will sometimes include travel expenses, particularly for graduate recruitment, but you should check first, rather than assuming.

Safe Interviewing

Don't ask questions about or make any references to:

1. Age, religion, racial heritage
2. Languages spoken at home (if part of the job description, you can ask in what languages the candidate is fluent)
3. Family: spouse's employment, child care, marital status, where parents were born, where the candidate was born, if family lives locally, sexual orientation
4. Home ownership, car ownership
5. Arrest record (you may ask if candidate has ever been convicted of a felony, not if they've ever been arrested)
6. Handicaps
7. Citizenship If the candidate volunteers information on any of the above "no-no's", say something like "That isn't information I need for this interview" and move on to safer territory.

Do keep questions open-ended and job-related and ask all candidates the same basic questions.

Interview Follow-Up

Write a note to the interviewer(s) expressing appreciation for the interview and let them know you are interested in the position. Putting your name in front of them one more time can sometimes make all the difference. Be sure to thank them for the time they gave you.

Contact the company later at an appropriate time suggested by the interviewer to find out the results.

Don't be discouraged if it doesn't work out, learn from the interview and find another opportunity.

Keep good records of all contacts for future reference.

Job Interview Techniques

Job interview techniques are vital to getting that job offer. Success is about more than just turning up and being well qualified. It's a myth that the best candidate gets the job. Chances are it's the person who's used proper job interview techniques - the strongest interviewee. If you can impress in the interview, you're much more likely to make it to the next round. It's a competitive market out there. Fortunately there are strategies and tactics you can use before, during and after the interview to tip the odds in your favor.

Human nature means the interviewer will have their own biases, even if they're not aware of them. They'll be constantly assessing how you're performing, compared to their expectations - and the first few minutes are when they'll form their main impression.

It's essential to use job interview techniques that influence the interviewer positively and demonstrate clearly why you're the ideal candidate for the job.

The good news is that there are techniques you can apply, to help you remain calm and confident - showing them the best "you".

The two most important interview techniques are making sure you're well prepared and being able to prove what you're saying, never lie or stretch the truth.

A good all around source for information is "Robin's book, **60 Seconds & You're Hired** is an absolute MUST if you are looking for a job."

Today's Business Journal

Ryan' discusses in special detail all the following information you need to know to impress employers. She's outline the major essentials as:

- Dress well, be conservative -- Neatness is as important. Ryan advises you on what works in this dress down society and what will instantly disqualify you as someone the employer will hire.
- Practice your handshake and eye contact
- Watch fidgeting and body language – what you don't say is almost as important as what you do say. One mistake and you are finished.
- Arrive on time -- There is no exception to this rule
- Display your manners during meals – this is the area where many people slip up.
- Never monopolize the conversation, never curse, or make crude jokes.
- Bragging or lying are taboo
- PRACTICE: answer the questions in 60 seconds or less with specific but concise answers.
- Impress them—hand-write your thank you note. You'll find detailed samples include a couple that landed the job after the thank you arrived, when the employer wasn't certain who to hire. (See her book **Winning Cover Letters** for those samples.)

Interview Etiquette: Manners, Meals and Interviews

A job interview is stressful enough for even the seasoned interviewee without adding lunch or dinner to the mix. However, for an employer it is a great place to interview their job candidates since it is a more relaxed atmosphere for them. It is a time when they can evaluate the candidates social skills and see if they can do well gracefully under pressure.

Dining with a prospective employee allows employers to observe interpersonal and communication skills along with table manners. Table manners really matter when trying to make a good impression. Good etiquette may give you a cutting edge over other prospective employees what ever the occasion may be. These skills will also come in handy later when entertaining clients or the boss. It is time to brush up on your etiquette skills. Let's start with dining etiquette.

Basic Table Manners

Before the Meal

If you are really nervous, locate where the dinner will be held to eliminate getting lost. If the meeting will be at a restaurant, check it out ahead of time. That way you'll know exactly what's on the menu and where to find the rest room.

Be polite. Say "please" and "thank you" to your server as well as to your host.

Put your napkin on your lap once everyone is seated.

Don't order the most expensive entree on the menu.

It is best to order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Foods like pasta with lots of sauce, chicken with bones, ribs, big sandwiches, and whole lobsters are hard to eat gracefully and can create embarrassing situations. Finger foods are messy as well and are best left for informal dining.

If the table is full of utensils, there is an easy way to remember what to use when. Start at the outside and work your way in. Your salad fork will be on the far left, your entree fork will be next to it. Your dessert spoon and fork will be above your plate. Liquids are on the right (drinking glass) and solids are on the left (bread and salad plates.)

Do not order alcoholic beverages Interviewing is tough enough without adding alcohol to the mix. Drinking too much when dining out is one of the most disliked behaviors. What a nice advantage to have the "Word of Wisdom" in our lives.

Do not smoke while dining out. There is politeness as well strength in obeying the "Word of Wisdom."

Beginning the Meal

Develop the habit of taking a moment to observe when the time is right to begin eating, it will prevent awkward moments. It will ensure that as a guest you will never find yourself with a full fork pushed halfway into your mouth just as the host begins to say grace. At smaller events, it is common to wait to take a bite until everyone at the table has received a serving and the hostess has begun eating. Sometimes a hostess may urge her guests to eat immediately upon receiving the food. This is especially true at larger events, where waiting for everyone would allow it to get cold. In this case, wait until one or two of the other guests are ready to begin as well, so that you are not the only person at the table who is eating.

Pre-meal cocktail foods and hors d'oeuvres can be eaten with the fingers.

During the Meal:

Do not season your food before you have tasted it.

If you need something that you cannot reach easily, politely ask the person closest to the item you need to pass it to you. For example, "After you have used them yourself, would you please pass me the salt and pepper?"

Pass both the salt and the pepper when asked to pass the salt. When passing, place them on the table within reach of the person next to you, who will do the same, and so on, until they reach the person who asked for them. They are not passed hand-to-hand, nor should anyone other than the original requester sprinkle her food when she has the shakers in her possession. This is also the method used in passing condiments and other food items or dishes.

Sit up straight at the table. It makes a good impression. You may lean forward slightly every now and then. Leaning back is not a good idea either; it shows a lack of interest in the table conversation. When you are not eating, keep your hands on your lap or resting on the table (with wrists on the edge of the table). Elbows on the table are acceptable only between courses, not while you are eating.

Never chew with your mouth open or make loud noises when you eat. Talking with your mouth full is never appropriate even when the bite you took was small.

The polite way to eat soup is to spoon it away from you. There's less chance of spilling in your lap that way too! When finished, place your soup spoon on the plate under the bowl. Do not slurp soup from a spoon. Eat your soup from the side of the spoon; avoid putting the entire bowl of the spoon in your mouth. If your soup is too hot to eat, let it sit until it cools; do not blow on it.

Eat rolls or bread by tearing off small bite size pieces and buttering only the piece you are preparing to eat. When ready for another piece, repeat the same process.

If food gets caught between your teeth and you can't remove it in private, never at the table.

Save asking for a doggy bag for informal dining situations never when you are a guest.

Engage in table conversation that is pleasant but entirely free of controversial subjects.

The general rule for removing food from your mouth is that it should go out the same way it went in. Therefore, olive pits can be delicately dropped onto an open palm before putting them onto your plate, and a piece of bone discovered in a bite of chicken should be returned to the plate by way of the fork. Fish is an exception to the rule. It is fine to remove the tiny bones with your fingers, since they would be difficult to drop from your mouth onto the fork. Never spit a piece of bad food or tough gristle into your napkin. Remove the food from your mouth using the same utensil it went in with. Place the piece of food on the edge of your plate. If possible, cover it with some other food from your plate.

There are foods you can eat with your fingers but an interview dinner is not the place to choose these as your meal. They are artichokes, asparagus, bacon, bread, cookies, corn on the cob, French fries, hamburgers, small fruits and berries on the stem, pickles olives, and all sandwiches that are not open face, served with dripping sauces or too big to fit in the mouth.

If a piece of your silverware falls onto the floor, pick it up if you can reach it and let the server know you need a clean one. If you cannot reach it, tell the server you dropped a piece of your silverware and ask for a clean one.

If you or someone you are dining with is left-handed, it is best for the left-handed person to sit at the left end of the table or at the head of the table. This arrangement helps ensure that everyone has adequate elbow room to eat comfortably.

If food spills off your plate, you may pick it up with a piece of your silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.

After the Meal:

Flatware should always be placed on the plate during pauses between bites. Between bites, place the flatware with the fork on the left and the knife on the right until the end of the meal, in which both are placed at the four o'clock position so the server knows you're done.

Remember to try and relax, listen, and participate in the conversation.

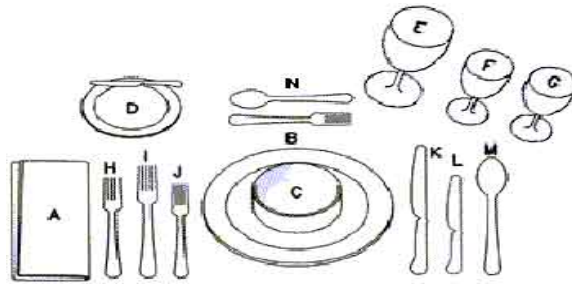
Put your napkin on the table next to your plate.

Let the prospective employer pick up the tab. The person who invited you will expect to pay both the bill and the tip.

Remember to say "thank you." Consider also following-up with a [thank you note](#) which reiterates your interest in the job.

The finger bowls are rarely used; however, a server offers the guests a bowl of water at the end of the meal, it is used to dip your fingers in to clean them. Shake them slightly and use your cloth napkin to wipe them dry.

Proper Table Setting



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Napkin | J | Meat or fish fork |
| B | Serving plate, may be used as the main entrée plate | K | Meat knife |
| C | Soup or salad bowl | L | Dinner knife |
| D | Bread plate with butter knife | M | Soup spoon |
| E | Water glass | N | Dessert spoon and fork |
| F | Beverage Glass | O | Oyster fork (not seen) Use the small fork angled into the soup spoon at right. This is the one exception to the rule of placing forks to the left of the plate. |
| G | Wine Glass | | |
| H | Salad fork | | |
| I | Dinner fork | | |

Holding a Utensil

For general use, both the spoon and the fork are held horizontally by balancing them between the first knuckle of the middle finger and the tip of the index finger while the thumb steadies the handle. Use the knife by placing the tip of the index finger gently out over the top of the blade near the bottom of the handle to guide as you cut.

Once-Used Placement

There are many rules regarding the placement of used flatware. The basic rule is that it must never be allowed to touch the surface of the table, where it might dirty the cloth. It is not proper to allow even the clean handle of a knife or fork to rest on the cloth while the other end lies on the plate. At the end of a course, a utensil must not be left in any dish that is not flat -- the soup bowl, for example, or a shrimp cocktail dish, a teacup or a parfait glass. All these items are usually presented with a plate underneath the bowl or cup, on which the utensil must be placed after use.